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SUBJECT: FINLAND PLEDGES \$12-14 MILLION FOR PALESTINIAN
ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 20388

¶1. In a meeting with Econoff on March 9, Desk Officer for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Middle East and North Africa Unit Anna Savolainen confirmed that Finland has pledged between \$12 million and \$14 million this year for assistance to the Palestinian Authority. This includes \$4.5 million the Finnish government (GOF) already committed in January 2009 to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

BULK OF GOF ASSISTANCE FUNDS TO BILATERAL PROJECTS

¶2. The remaining \$7.5million to \$9.5 million will be distributed via a variety of bilateral development projects. Projects under consideration include capacity building at the Ministry of Education; a water rehabilitation project in the northwest villages of East Jerusalem; and implementation of the second phase of a World Bank-sponsored land registration project. The GOF has not yet decided if pledged funds will be used for budgetary support, humanitarian assistance or both.

BUTLER